

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Status of Claims:

Claims 7-11, 16, 17, 19 and 20 are currently being cancelled.

Claims 1 and 2 are currently being amended.

No claims are currently being added.

This amendment and reply amends and cancels claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending and canceling the claims as set forth above, claims 1-6, 12-15 and 18 are now pending in this application.

Indication of Allowable Subject Matter:

Applicants appreciate the indication in the Office Action that claims 19 and 20 contain allowable subject matter. By way of this amendment and reply, presently pending independent claim 1 has been amended to include the features of “objected to” (and now canceled) claim 20, whereby claim 1 is now in allowable form based on the indications made in the Office Action with respect to claim 20. Claims 3-6, 12-15 and 18 depend from claim 1, and thus those claims are also now in allowable form. Also, by way of this amendment and reply, claim 2 has been amended to place that claim in independent form to include the features of its base claim and “objected to” claim 19 (now canceled), whereby claim 2 is now in allowable form based on the indications made in the Office Action with respect to claim 19.

Claim Rejections – Prior Art:

In the Office Action, claims 1-8, 10, 11, 13-16 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,278,797 to Nagasaki et al.; and claims 9, 12 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Nagasaki et al. Due to the amendments made to presently pending claims 1 and 2 such that those claims have been

placed in allowable form to include the features of "objected to" claims 20 and 19, respectively, these rejections are now moot.

Conclusion:

Since all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed in this Amendment and Reply, Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorize payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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